ROUTE

460

Location Study

A NEWSLETTER TO INFORM, EDUCATE AND INVOLVE THE PUBLIC
WINTER 2004 • ISSUE 2

INTRODUCTION

This is the second newsletter updating you on the progress of the Route 460 Location Study. This study, conducted by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), will look into future improvements to Route 460 between Interstate 295 in Prince George County and the Suffolk bypass (Route 58) in Suffolk.

Look inside for a map of proposed solutions under study, also called conceptual alternatives. Although there are many ways to stay informed (see the back cover for information), the best way is to attend an upcoming public meeting. Two Citizen Information Meetings will be held on February 24 and 26—details are below. Your input will give us a better understanding of your thoughts and help us in evaluating the conceptual alternatives.

Join us at our next citizen information meetings

Each meeting will be set up in two locations within the study area. The meeting format will be an "open forum" style that allows you to visit at your convenience.

Meeting times are 4:00 PM–8:00 PM.

Meeting Locations:

Tuesday, February 24
Windsor High School
24 Church Street
Windsor, VA

Thursday, February 26
J.E.J. Moore Middle School
11455 Prince George Drive
Disputanta, VA

Thank You for Your Comments

More than 200 area residents came to our first round of citizen meetings held in August 2003. We want to express our appreciation to those that were able to attend. You shared with us your comments about the study… here's a summary of what you said:

- You believed the study should address safety issues — especially involving large trucks.
- You wanted some physical road improvements, such as a median, divided highway, access road, bypass, or turning lanes.
- You helped identify the sensitive resources in the study area.
- You expressed concerns about local watersheds, wetlands, and swamps.
- You expressed concern with the air quality in the study area.
- You voiced your concerns about the impacts on the towns along Route 460 as well as farmlands and the aesthetics of a new highway.
- Your comments varied: some believed that a lot needs to be done to improve existing Route 460 and some believed that nothing should be done to the roadway.

"What transportation problems would you like to see addressed in the Study?"

29%
mentioned Safety

34%
mentioned Median, divided highway, widening (460), access road, bypass, or turn lanes

38%
mentioned Traffic, primarily truck traffic

VDOT values your comments and factors them into making crucial decisions. Make sure your comments are heard by attending the citizen information meetings in February. Don't miss this opportunity to provide your ideas.

Study History

Designated part of the national "TransAmerica Corridor," and then part of an improvement study between Beckley, West Virginia and Virginia Beach, the Route 460 Location Study is the next step in the improvement process. The Hampton Roads and Tri-Cities Metropolitan Planning Organizations have included Route 460 corridor improvements into their constrained long-range plans. The Commonwealth's Six-Year Transportation Plan also incorporates Route 460 improvements.

ROUTE 460 Location Study

ROUTE 460 SCHEDULE

Notice to Proceed	Spring 2003
Scoping/Public Meetings	Summer 2003
Purpose and Need	Fall 2003
Alternatives Development	Fall 2003 – Summer 2004
▶ Citizen Information Meetings	Early 2004
DEIS	Fall 2004
Public Hearings	Early 2005
FEIS and Comment Response	Spring 2005 – Fall 2005
ROD	Early 2006

Purpose and Need for the Route 460 Location Study

The purpose and need document identifies the transportation problems the study needs to address and serves as a basis for developing and screening solutions to those problems. Key elements include:

1. Address roadway deficiencies: Route 460 has design and operational deficiencies that cause safety and mobility problems.

2. Improve safety: Crash rates for Route 460 are higher than for other similar roadways in Virginia.

3. Accommodate increasing freight shipments: Truck percentages for Route 460 are significantly higher than national averages for similar rural roads. Truck traffic is forecasted to grow due to expansions at the Port of Virginia.

4. Reduce travel delay: Future traffic volumes will result in increased travel delays on Route 460 due to capacity limitations at traffic signals and the lack of access control.

5. Provide adequate hurricane evacuation capability: Route 460 is a designated hurricane evacuation route for Hampton Roads communities.

6. Assure strategic military importance: Route 460 is a part of the Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET) designated by the Department of Defense and the Federal Highway Administration.

7. Meet legislative mandate: Federal legislation, as well as the Virginia Transportation Act of 2000, identified the roadway as a high priority corridor for improvement.

8. Meet local economic development plans: Localities within the Route 460 study area have identified the need for transportation improvements to meet their economic development objectives.

- **Fatality and injury rates along Route 460 are higher than on similar four-lane highways in Virginia.**
- **555 crashes occurred along Route 460 from 1999 to 2001. The greatest number (29%) were rear-end collisions, while crashes involving tractor-trailors accounted for 14% of total crashes.**

Route 460 Study Process

We Are Here

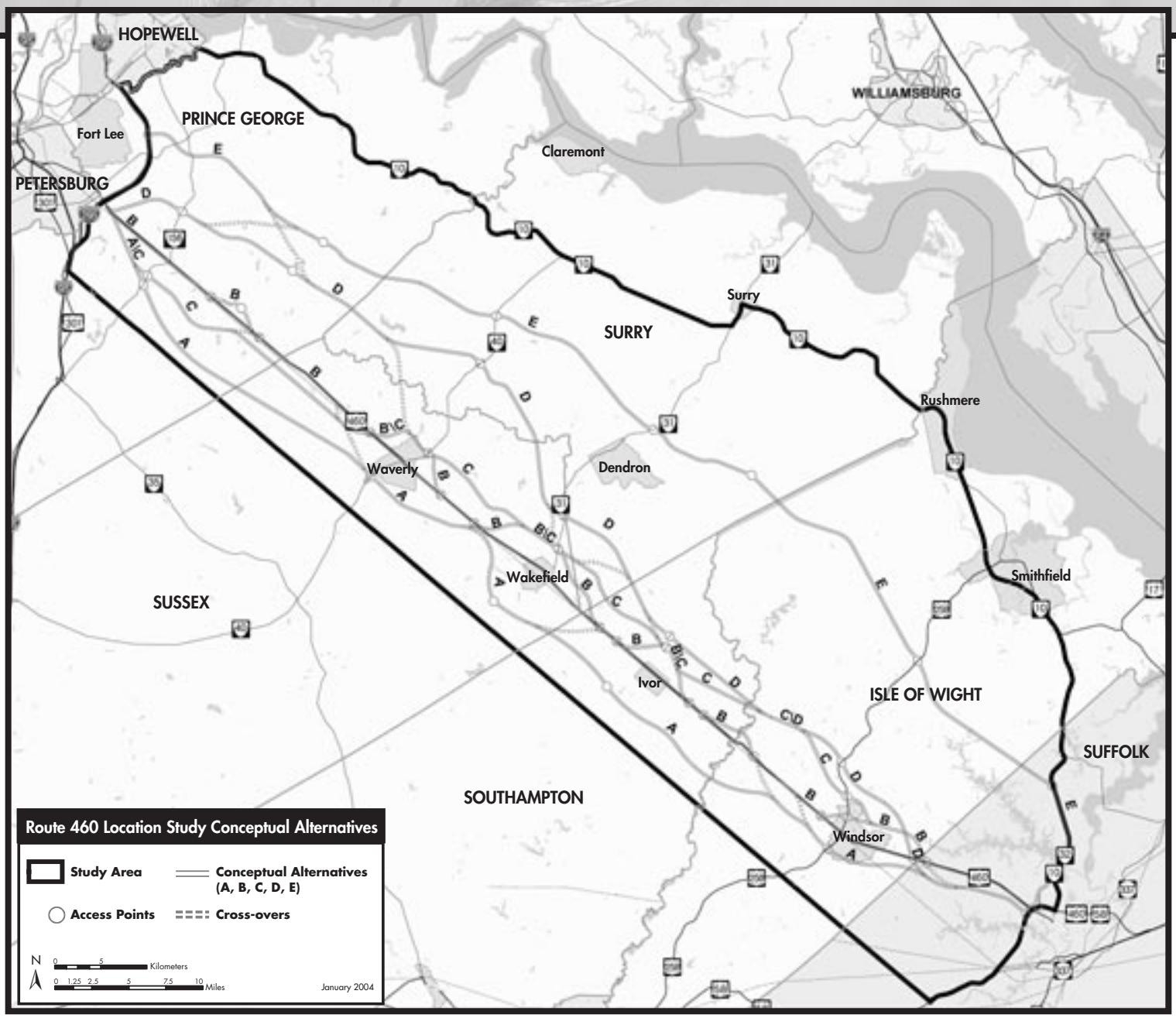
Scoping
- Determine issues to be addressed
- Identify sensitive resources

Purpose and Need
- Study transportation problems within study area
- Identify project needs

Alternatives Development

Determine:
- Conceptual Alternatives to address project needs
- Screening process to produce Candidate Build Alternatives
- No-Build Alternative
- Transportation Systems Management Alternative
- Mass Transit Alternative

Evaluation of Impacts to:
- Air Quality and Noise
- Historic Properties
- Hazardous Materials
- Wetlands and Streams
- Threatened and Endangered Species
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space
- Social and Economic Issues



Conceptual Alternatives – What are the Possible Solutions?

The map above illustrates possible solutions to the project needs, called conceptual alternatives. The alternatives to be studied in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) range from major improvements (build alternatives) to doing nothing at all (No-Build Alternative).

Major improvements could include a highway in a new location. Several possible alignments are depicted on the map above (Alternatives **A, C, D** and **E**). Access points would be provided at major roadways within the study area. See the map for the locations of the potential access points.

Another alternative that will be studied includes major improvements to the existing Route 460 (Alternative **B** on the map). A range of improvement options are being considered, such as dividing the travel lanes, controlling access (reducing or removing driveways that intersect Route 460), and providing bypasses around the existing towns.

The Transportation Systems Management (TSM) alternative (not depicted on the map) involves very basic upgrades to the current Route 460 with little or no land acquisition. Such upgrades would include adding turn lanes at critical intersections, adding traffic signals, or adjusting signal timing to improve traffic flow. Adding additional travel lanes, grade-separated interchanges, or drainage systems are not included in this alternative.

Additionally, the DEIS will consider using mass transit along the Route 460 corridor. This could be anything from an express bus to a commuter rail service. Finally, there is the option of making no changes beyond the minor improvements already planned for Route 460.

ROUTE 460 Location Study

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Inside:

- **Citizen Information Meetings—Feb. 24 and Feb. 26**
- **Conceptual Alternatives Map**
- **Study Schedule**
- **And more**

Route 460 Location Study **Q** & **A**

Q *What's the next step in the study process?*

A The study team will review the comments you provide to us and continue to refine the conceptual alternatives based upon engineering and environmental issues. The alternatives then will be screened and reduced to a set of Candidate Build Alternatives (CBAs). The CBAs will be evaluated in greater detail and documented in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that will be available for your review. A Location Hearing will be held in early 2005 to present and get your input on the CBAs and DEIS.

Q *How can I get a map with proposed alternatives?*

A The best way is to pick up a copy at the meeting. But if you can't make it, go to www.virginiadot.org/projects/460.asp and you can download a PDF when it becomes available. Or, contact us and we'll put one in the mail for you.

Q *Is there another study about operating passenger rail service through this area?*

A Yes. The Richmond/Hampton Roads High-Speed Rail Study is determining if passenger rail should run along the Route 460 corridor or the I-64 corridor. It's a separate study from this one, but both studies want your input. We encourage you to participate in both efforts. Go to www.drpt.state.va.us/projects/current/shr.asp for the feasibility study information about the rail study effort. You may also call the Study Information Line at 1-877-RICH2HR or 1-877-742-4247.

Do you have additional Questions or Comments about the Route 460 Location Study?

- **Call:** Jim Clarke, 804-371-6845
- **Email:** 460LocationStudy@VirginiaDOT.org
- **Write to VDOT:** Mr. Jim Clarke
  Virginia Department of Transportation
  1201 East Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219
- **Fax:** 804-786-7401
- **Visit the Study Web site for more information:**
  www.virginiadot.org/projects/460.asp

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